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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00
	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7363

INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

USDOC WASHDC

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 005838

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
USDOC FOR DHENKE-ROGERS
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
NNEMAN, AA/AFR - VDERRYCK, AND A/AID - RMCCALL

USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL 09/20/10

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [EAGR](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: TENSIONS ON COMMERCIAL FARMS CONTINUE

CLASSIFIED BY CDA EARL IRVING. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: THE SITUATION ON COMMERCIAL FARMS REMAINS TENSE, WITH NEW OCCUPATIONS AND FEW EVICTIONS OF LONG-STANDING SQUATTERS BEING CARRIED OUT. THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) AND THE ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE (ZRP) CONTINUE TO BE INCONSISTENT AND INCOHERENT. COMMERCIAL FARMERS HAVE MANAGED TO PLANT SOME CROPS, ALBEIT FEWER HECTARES. FARM WORKERS ARE GETTING INCREASINGLY ANGRY AS THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO THREATENS THEIR LIVELIHOODS. HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER NKOMO MET WITH THE CFU IN KAROI DISTRICT ON OCTOBER 11 AND STATED THAT FARM INVADERS SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' PLANTING OF CROPS. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) ECONOFF MET ON OCTOBER 12 WITH OFFICIALS OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION ON COMMERCIAL FARMS.

ONGOING AND NEW OCCUPATIONS

¶3. (C) ACCORDING TO THE CFU THERE ARE CURRENTLY BETWEEN 900 AND 1000 OCCUPIED FARMS. THIS IS DOWN FROM A HIGH OF AROUND 1700 FARMS INVADED DURING THE RUN-UP TO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS LAST JUNE. TWO TO THREE NEW
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FARMS HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED EVERY WEEK, BUT THESE OCCUPATIONS DO NOT ALL BECOME PERMANENT. SOMETIMES THE OCCUPIERS LEAVE THE FARMS AFTER ONLY A FEW DAYS. ACCORDING TO THE CFU, 10-15 PERCENT OF THE OCCUPIERS ARE WAR VETERANS, AND THE REMAINDER ARE POOR, LANDLESS ZIMBABWEANS FROM THE COMMUNAL AREAS THAT ARE CLOSE TO THE OCCUPIED FARMS.

MIXED SIGNALS FROM THE GOZ AND ZRP

¶4. (C) GOZ OFFICIALS AND THE ZRP CONTINUE TO SEND MIXED SIGNALS REGARDING THE FARM INVASIONS AND THE RULE OF LAW. IN SOME PROVINCES, GOZ OFFICIALS, FROM GOVERNORS ON DOWN, HAVE STATED THAT NO MORE FARM OCCUPATIONS WILL BE TOLERATED, AND THE ZRP ARE ACTING TO PREVENT NEW OCCUPATIONS, AS WELL AS ASSOCIATED CRIMINAL ACTS. IN OTHER PROVINCES, THE OPPOSITE IS OCCURRING. AN EXAMPLE IS MASHONALAND CENTRAL, WHERE THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

HAS TOLD OWNERS OF FARMS LISTED FOR SEIZURE NOT TO PLANT. THE CFU CONTINUES TO RECEIVE NUMEROUS REPORTS FROM FARMERS THAT COMPLAINTS TO THE LOCAL POLICE CONSTABLES ABOUT CRIMINALITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FARM OCCUPATIONS ARE OFTEN MET WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT WHAT IS OCCURRING IS ILLEGAL, BUT THAT IT IS A POLITICAL ISSUE AND THEIR HANDS ARE TIED.

MOST FARMERS HAVE PLANTED SOME CROPS

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15. (C) ACCORDING TO THE CFU, ALMOST ALL THEIR MEMBERS HAVE MANAGED TO PLANT SOME CROPS. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF FARMERS CONTINUE TO BE DENIED NEW FINANCING BY BANKS BECAUSE OF THE UNSETTLED SITUATION, THEY HAVE MANAGED TO SCRAPE TOGETHER THE RESOURCES TO PLANT SMALLER CROPS. MANY TOBACCO FARMERS FOR INSTANCE, ARE PLANTING FEWER HECTARES. BECAUSE THEY ARE ALSO PLANTING LATE, THEY WILL BE PUTTING IN ONLY ONE TOBACCO CROP INSTEAD OF THE NORMAL TWO. THE CFU ESTIMATES THAT 50 PERCENT FEWER HECTARES OF MAIZE WILL BE PLANTED, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THIS IS A CROP WITH A HIGH RATE OF THEFT, AND FARMERS FEAR THAT THEIR CROPS WILL BE STOLEN AT HARVEST TIME. WHILE MOST FARMERS HAVE MANAGED TO FIND THE MONEY TO PLANT, THE CFU FEARS THAT BY JANUARY MANY WILL RUN OUT OF MONEY FOR INPUTS NEEDED TO TEND AND HARVEST THEIR CROPS, UNLESS THE BANKS ARE PERSUADED TO LOAN TO THEM.

TENSIONS ARE RISING AMONG FARM WORKERS

16. (C) ACCORDING TO THE CFU, THE MAJORITY OF ALTERCATIONS ON FARMS HAVE BEEN SPARKED BY INCREASING

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ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AMONG FARM WORKERS, WHO ARE FED UP WITH THE ABUSE BEING VISITED ON THEM BY WAR VETERANS. SINCE THE GOZ IS LARGELY DOING NOTHING TO PROTECT THEM, THEY ARE TAKING ACTION IN SELF-DEFENSE TO PROTECT THEIR OWN LIVELIHOODS. THE CFU BELIEVES THAT MORE VIOLENCE IS INEVITABLE AS THE CROP SEASON CONTINUES.

THE CFU AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER NKOMO MEET IN KAROI

17. (C) IN ONE PROMISING DEVELOPMENT HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER NKOMO AND POLICE COMMISSIONER CHIHURI MET ON OCTOBER 11 IN KAROI, ONE OF THE AREAS WORST-HIT BY LAND RELATED VIOLENCE, WITH CFU EXECUTIVES, LOCAL FARMERS,

LOCAL BUSINESS PEOPLE, AND WAR VETERANS WHO HAVE BEEN OCCUPYING NEARBY COMMERCIAL FARMS. NKOMO TOLD THE GATHERING THAT THE FARMERS SHOULD GO AHEAD WITH THEIR PLANTING AND THAT THE FARM OCCUPIERS SHOULD NOT INTERFERE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE OCCUPIERS SHOULD STAY PUT WHERE THEY ARE, AND THAT THEY WILL BE RESETTLED ON LAND AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE. COMMISSIONER CHIHURI TOLD THE ASSEMBLED GROUP THAT THE FARMERS, FARM WORKERS, AND WAR VETERANS SHOULD AVOID CONFRONTATIONS, AND THAT THE ZRP WOULD ARREST PEOPLE WHO INTERFERE WITH FARMING ACTIVITIES OR COMMIT OTHER CRIMES ON THE LAND ON WHICH THEY ARE SQUATTING. THE CFU BELIEVED THIS WAS A PRODUCTIVE MEETING THAT MIGHT RESULT IN SOME REDUCTION

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IN LAWLESSNESS IN THE AREA, WHICH HAS BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF, A FORMER WAR VETERAN WHO OPENLY SYMPATHIZES WITH THE LAND OCCUPIERS.

18. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SITUATION ON COMMERCIAL FARMS HAS ONLY MARGINALLY IMPROVED. ALTHOUGH THE GOZ HAS STATED THAT NO MORE FARM INVASIONS WILL BE ALLOWED, NEW OCCUPATIONS CONTINUE TO OCCUR. THE RESPONSE BY POLICE TO CRIMINAL ACTS OCCURRING ON OCCUPIED FARMS VARIES WIDELY BY DISTRICT AND PROVINCE. MOST FARMERS ARE PLANTING, BUT DOING SO UNDER THE MENACING EYES OF WAR VETERANS ON THEIR LANDS, AND ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY MAY NOT GET THE FINANCING TO HARVEST THE CROP THEY ARE PUTTING IN THE GROUND. THE CFU MEETING WITH MINISTER NKOMO IN KAROZ WOULD APPEAR TO BE A PROMISING SIGN, BUT, AS ALWAYS, WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS ON THE GROUND WILL MATTER MUCH MORE THAN GOVERNMENT PROMISES. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE GOZ IS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CFU ON A LAND REFORM PROGRAM THAT BOTH PARTIES COULD ACCEPT AND WOULD RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW. AGRICULTURE MINISTER MADE, FOR EXAMPLE, REFUSES TO MEET WITH THE CFU. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE INCREASING TENSIONS AND UNCERTAINTY SO LONG AS THE GOZ REFUSES TO DEVELOP A FAIR, TRANSPARENT LAND REFORM PROGRAM AND CONTINUES TO USE THE LAND ISSUE PRIMARILY AS A POLITICAL TOOL. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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